Motor Vehicle Accident: Care Instructions

Overview

You were seen by a doctor after a motor vehicle accident. Because of the accident, you may be sore for several days. Over the next few days, you may hurt more than you did just after the accident.

The doctor has checked you carefully, but problems can develop later. If you notice any problems or new symptoms, **get medical treatment right away**.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Keep track of any new symptoms or changes in your symptoms.
- Take it easy for the next few days, or longer if you are not feeling well. Do not try to do too much.
- Put ice or a cold pack on any sore areas for 10 to 20 minutes at a time to stop swelling. Put a thin cloth between the ice pack and your skin. Do this several times a day for the first 2 days.
- Be safe with medicines. Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
    - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
    - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
- Do not drive after taking a prescription pain medicine.
- Do not do anything that makes the pain worse.
- Do not drink any alcohol for 24 hours or until your doctor tells you it is okay.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new or worse belly pain.
- You have new or worse trouble breathing.
- You have new or worse head pain.
- You have new pain, or your pain gets worse.
- You have new symptoms, such as numbness or vomiting.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You are not getting better as expected.

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